

if it is necessary," and she opened the door wide and Serena followed her down a broad hallway and into a pretty reception room.

"What is it, please?" spoke a young lady writing at a table.

In her excitement Serena forgot all about her unaccustomed attire. She drew aside her veil. She extended the package and excitedly told her story.

"You lovely dear!" spoke Miss Mapleton graciously. "I don't understand what it all means, but you have been very thoughtful to take all this trouble. You must leave your name and address. This may be important and my brother may find it necessary to see you."

Serena gave her name and address. The young lady accompanied her to the door and Serena went away dazzled with the handsome appointments of the house. She did not hear from the Mapletons, as she half expected, but about noon a florist's wagon drove up to the door and delivered a beautiful bouquet of rare flowers.

The next day another bouquet arrived and the one following. Serena suspected the source from which the flowers came. She asked the florist in regard to the sender.

"A young lady who did not give her name," he explained. "She ordered a bouquet daily for two weeks and paid for them in advance."

"Of course it is Miss Mapleton," decided Serena. She was somewhat disappointed. During that brief visit to the Mapleton home she had noticed the portrait of a handsome young man hanging on the wall. The resemblance to Miss Mapleton had convinced Serena that this was her brother. She wondered if her restoration of the packet had signified anything of importance to him.

Meantime Clement Mapleton had left the city. He had done so speedily the evening Serena had returned the packet. It was with a startled face that he had received it from his

sister and listened gravely to her story.

"You will send this Miss Hoyt a bouquet every day that I am gone," he directed, "and I shall go to her personally and acknowledge the great service she has done when I return."

"What are the papers, brother?" inquired Miss Mapleton.

"They are documents compromising a son of my invalid partner in Colorado," replied her brother. "To have them made public would kill Mr. Daggett. He left them with me for safe-keeping. They must be destroyed, but not without his sanction and I must go to him at once."

"But who stole them?" inquired Miss Mapleton.

"It must have been a young man we discharged last week, who placed them in the hands of professional criminals to blackmail Mr. Daggett. They mistook this Miss Hoyt in her exigency outfit for some accomplice."

Serena fluttered and her color came rosy and swift as one day she was informed that a Mr. Mapleton awaited her in the parlor. His clear, frank eyes scanned her with animation as she entered the room.

"I have called to bring you a slight souvenir from a dying man, Miss Hoyt," he spoke, "whose last days you have made peaceful by restoring to us certain stolen papers."

He extended a beautiful jeweled brooch. Serena drew back in consternation.

"My friend has insisted that you accept this slight token of his deep gratitude," proceeded Mapleton, "and you must not cause him disappointment by refusing."

Not a word in explanation of the mystery was vouchsafed. A few evenings later Mapleton called again, this time accompanied by his sister.

There grew up a speedy friendship between the three. Then it came about that Mapleton called alone several times.